

Relegation—A Formula for Blowback

A Comment

[Jett Rucker](#)

Pre-emptive censorship is a nefarious but effective form of suppression that is as close as this issue's editorial, in which Richard Widmann reports the peremptory expungement of *Inconvenient History's* two bound annual books of our Website's articles from the offerings of their erstwhile publisher, Lulu Publishing. Not only are our laboriously compiled books no longer listed in Lulu's catalog, they aren't even supplied to our own private order. It's not only not our book, it has in fact become a nonbook, in the manner of nonpersons as depicted in George Orwell's *1984*.

But for cases where the impermissible thoughts have already been expressed (published, spoken, or uploaded), there is yet another evil device in the censor's torture chamber, known technically as censorship after the fact. One case of this form of censorship is described in detail in Prof. Dan McGowan's article, also in this issue, in which a gang of his former colleagues at Hobart and William Smith Colleges punished him by circulating an e-mail that called for withdrawal of Dr. McGowan's emeritus professorship at their institution. He further cites (or recites, actually, verbatim), Laird Wilcox's eight Elements of Ritual Defamation, which represents the archetype of a form of punishment by which censorship after the fact is commonly practiced. Ritual defamation, as Wilcox originally explained in his 1990 essay, "... is the destruction or attempted destruction of the reputation, status, character or standing in the community of a person or group of persons by unfair, wrongful, or malicious speech or publication." My own term for the crime is "reputational terrorism."

The primary purposes of reputational terrorism are twofold: (a) to incite the original offender to desist from any repetitions of his offense—to silence him; and (b) to discourage others who might come out publicly in agreement with the original offender or with other material in effect committing a similar offense—to make an example of the victim. Item (b) can work, if the defamation reaches a wide enough audience, makes clear what the offense was, and properly intimidates members of the audience without inflaming them with disgust or hatred for the defamer. Accusations of "Holocaust denial" remain effective for the present thanks to a long tradition in the West of training students to reflexively revile people to whom such a label is affixed, but overuse of the label together with overtraining in the requisite reaction may be eroding the effectiveness of this particular ritual. Where the process is effective in deterring other would-be publicizers of a proscribed viewpoint, the censorship-after-the-fact becomes pre-emptive censorship, always the preferred form of suppression for undesirable opinions.

But Item (a), causing the offender to desist from attacks on whomever or whatever the defamer wishes to protect, can backfire badly through various mechanisms, including arousing in the victim a desire to avenge the defamation by manifesting exactly the reaction he knows unmistakably the defamer wishes to discourage. Where once the offender—say, someone who expresses a disbelief in the full authenticity of most claims for Holocaust reparations payments—might have doubted, disagreed with, or disapproved of one or two sensitive, but minor points in the ideology or myth the defamer wishes to defend, the defamation attracts from its victim a greatly increased level of attention and zeal to the entire program that the defamer is seen to be protecting. Seeking more points on which to get back at his (typically remote, usually anonymous) detractor, the defamed party might, in the case just cited,

expand his animus from mere fraudulent reparations claims to the underlying historical claims for the event itself (the Holocaust, in this case), discovering and promoting the growing forensics-based debunking of major aspects (e.g., gas chambers) of the Holocaust legend that has been so carefully and successfully nurtured and propagated these 65 years, now.

Continuing in his quest, the aggrieved victim of reputational terrorism might even proceed from broad-spectrum Holocaust revisionism to a review of the uses various Jewish organizations, the state of Israel foremost among these, make of the episode, and discover an entire new world of atrocities being justified and obscured by the traditions of the long-cultivated Holocaust legend, and take up public opposition to these programs as well. In extreme cases, it is readily imaginable that the desire for revenge could even lead, in a case like that hypothesized, to anti-Semitism, in which the victim is likely still to be committing no moral offense any worse than the one that was originally committed against him.

The foregoing outlines a series of developments culminating possibly in full-blown fanaticism, understandably and perversely arising from the motive of revenge against those who commit ritual defamation in a treacherous defense of some ideology or program of propaganda. But compounding the dynamic and motivation of revenge just described is a further dimension of reaction that, while possibly less calculated or willful, is fully as potent in leading the defamed party to a course of action precisely opposite to the desired reaction of “standing down,” or even recanting, as some Holocaust revisionists have done under various forms of duress or enticement. This amplifying consequence of ritual defamation, which is entirely consistent with the defamer’s frequent desire to actually harm his victim, I call “relegation.” It consists of the denial of the defamed party’s *alternatives* to (continuing with the illustrative case) public behaviors which got him defamed in the first place, including, particularly, whatever profession (likely one involving some level of public visibility) the target may have been a member of, or preparing to be a member of.

One rather spectacular case displaying indications of this scenario is that of perhaps a leading Holocaust revisionist, Germar Rudolf, formerly of Germany. While a candidate for the Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Stuttgart, Rudolf was hired to provide expert testimony in the trial of a person accused of the crime (in Germany) of Holocaust denial. Rudolf’s testimony was confined to the subjects of chemistry in which Rudolf was already in his late twenties an eminent authority. After the trial, Rudolf’s testimony, together with other non-contrite commentary by the defendant in the trial, was published as a book in Germany. For his contributions to the contents of this book, Rudolf found himself facing criminal charges of Holocaust denial. The process of Rudolf’s relegation began with the university’s threatening to withhold the Ph.D. degree for which Rudolf had in fact completed his dissertation.

Denied the premier credential in his chosen field for which he had trained for many laborious years, and further feeling a powerful compulsion to resist the pressures being brought to bear on him, Rudolf defiantly extended his scientific inquiries into the forensic bases of the Holocaust legendry, and branched out into publishing activities through which he disseminated his consistently earth-shaking discoveries. The one-man avalanche called Germar Rudolf (no “Dr.” for Herr Rudolf) continued gathering momentum and force until 2005, when he was finally arrested in the United States, taken away from his American wife and child, deported to Germany, and there made to stand trial for his “crimes,” at the conclusion of which he was sentenced to 30 months in jail. Rudolf shares with his thousands of supporters all over the world an eminently justified outrage at what he has suffered for voicing his

soundly based opinions, and what measures this treatment may move him to take now that he has regained his freedom fuels the hopes of Holocaust revisionists everywhere. And these hopes run squarely and powerfully against the results that obviously were hoped for by those who launched their vicious campaign against him so long ago.

Perversions of this kind are by no means unknown in other areas, and in processes other than ritual defamation. In fact, it is *punishment for belief*, or the expression of belief, that leads to the “recidivism” of which the Rudolf case is but one of many going back through history at least to Martin Luther. The perpetual stigmatization by employers, often in compliance with governmental regulations, of ordinary criminals who have served their terms in prison relegates those who, as the phrase goes, “have paid their debt to society” to ways of making a living that are open to ex-convicts—that is, crime. So also with “thought crimes” such as Holocaust revisionism, with the exception of the fact that expounding analyses of the evidence for the Holocaust is for most of us less profitable than, say, robbing a bank. But if you are denied your intended career in, say, chemistry as in Rudolf’s case, or journalism as in the case of the late commentator Joseph Sobran, you are as good as confined to the very sphere of activity from which your malefactors obviously intended to dissuade you in the first place, especially if you regard its continuation as an ennobling duty rather than a degrading necessity.

It is, perhaps, only just that the perpetrators of reputational terrorism receive such fierce blowback as reward for their skullduggery. In the case of many such perpetrators, such as the Anti-Defamation League, this blowback only serves their purposes by aggravating the very problem they gain their donations for combating, rather like a glazier who discourages vandals from breaking windows by throwing rocks at the vandals—often missing and instead breaking the windows. Like arms dealers, they thrive on discord, and this how they go about fomenting it, assuming the poses of saints even as they do it.

Every now and then, a well-meaning friend notes how much of my time I devote to revisionism and asks, “Don’t you have anything *else* to do?”

Of course, I *don’t* have much else to do.

Not anymore, anyway.

Author(s):	Jett Rucker
Title:	Relegation—A Formula for Blowback
Sources:	<i>Inconvenient History</i> , 4(1) (2012)
Dates:	published: 2012-04-01, first posted: 2014-02-17 00:00:00

<https://www.inconvenienthistory.com/4/1/3172>